

**Carla Luciano Codani Hisatugo, Ph.D.**

# An important message about life and death during the COVID-19 outbreak



*How to talk to children when considering  
their emotional development*

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TO EDUARDO HISATUGO AND JULIO HISATUGO: THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR YOUR COLLABORATION AND ENTHUSIASM!

MANY THANKS TO OUR FAMILY MEMBERS, FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES.

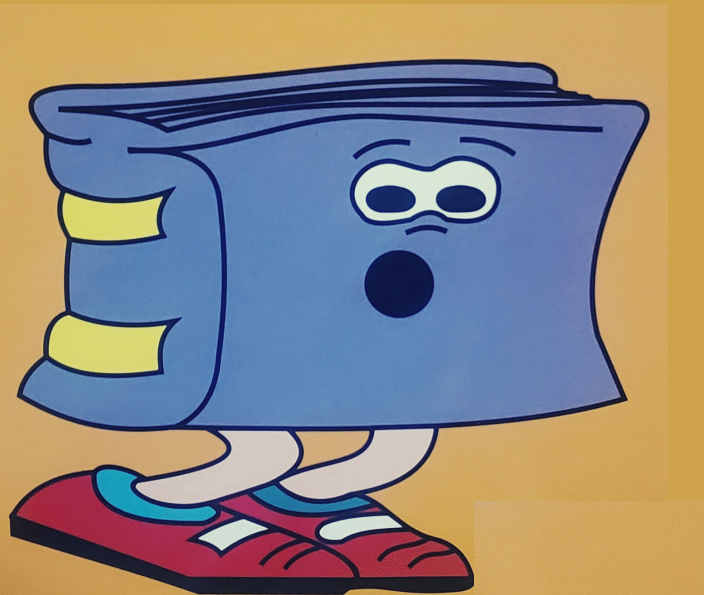
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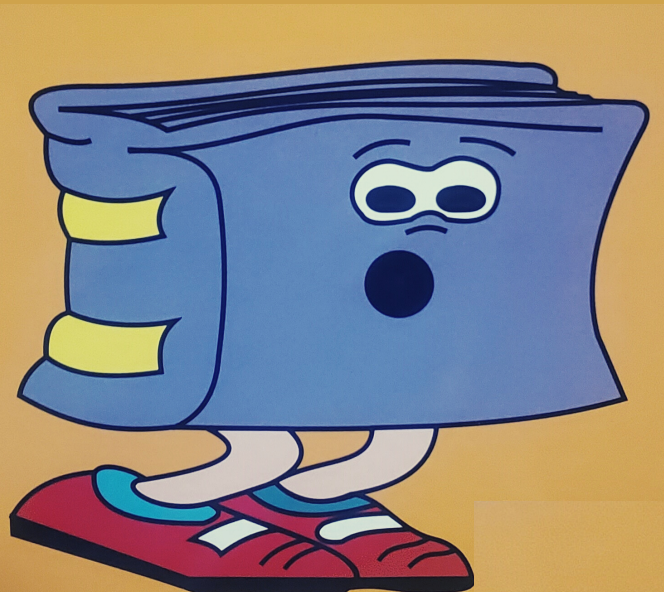




# Speaking with adults: main aspects to consider when discussing life and death during the COVID-19 outbreak 3

*The death of a loved one can mean a great loss.*

It seems that all of us are dealing with loss and the need to cope and to adapt - as a direct result of the **COVID-19 outbreak**. Thus, children are probably hearing much more about other people's deaths, losses and adversities. Especially in the face of uncertain times, it will be up to adults to help children by providing physical and emotional security. **Even during these complex times, it is essential for the children to be able to play and to express their feelings. The child will thrive by keeping high hopes for his or her future and by remaining confident to live the present time.**



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*During these moments of mourning and great loss, talking children about life and death requires much dedication and care.*

There is no need to alarm children but it is important to inform them about basic health care matters and to listen to their concerns. If there are losses, it is necessary to remember that the children perceive and react to grief, gradually understanding death and its consequences. By omitting someone's death or not talking properly about grief, the adult can harm both: the child's development and his or her necessary grieving process. **The adult must choose the best moment to explain about the death of a beloved one, according to each age and development phase, considering the child's feelings and the adult's feelings as well.** It is also important to consider and talk about the impacts of the absence of a loved one on the child's daily life.



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*The arrival of Covid-19 has generated a major change in our behavior.*

**Looking on the bright side, our behavior has become mostly linked to the need of taking care of ourselves to ensure a healthy life.** To ensure good health, people usually consider physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Nevertheless, adults must keep in mind to always seek reliable and current information. When addressing these issues with children; it is necessary to talk in the most natural way possible. **Children's fears should always be heard, they can never be overlooked or ridiculed.**



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*Finally: when facing difficult times, we all tend to remember many other losses and we might feel that we need to deal with the grieving process again.*

**That's ok!** It can be difficult to deal with current adversities when we are not done grieving losses from our past. We can always look for professional help (a psychotherapist help us cope) and it is important to respect every moment of our lives. **When feelings are shared: sadness, confusion, and anger among others will eventually be replaced by love and care, gratitude, and peace.**



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## The following pages are reserved for children's activities.

Adults can read to the child and talk to them about the themes of each page. Otherwise, children can read in the presence of an adult. The discussion with children can be done during what is referred to as the "child's zone" which are activities that the child will be engaged with in the following pages. The discussion can also be done after they have finished the activities. **Check everything they have done and encourage them to talk about it. Also congratulate their hard work. Don't judge or correct their work, accept it as it is.** Children may be willing to talk about recent loss or some loss from the past. Embrace and accept all forms of their communication.

*Kindly respect children's will, their pace and the appropriated time for this discussion.*



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## Speaking with the child: child's zone (activities)

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**Have you ever talked to anyone about life and death?**

**If your answered YES: how was this talk?**

**If your answered NO: how would you like to have this talk?**



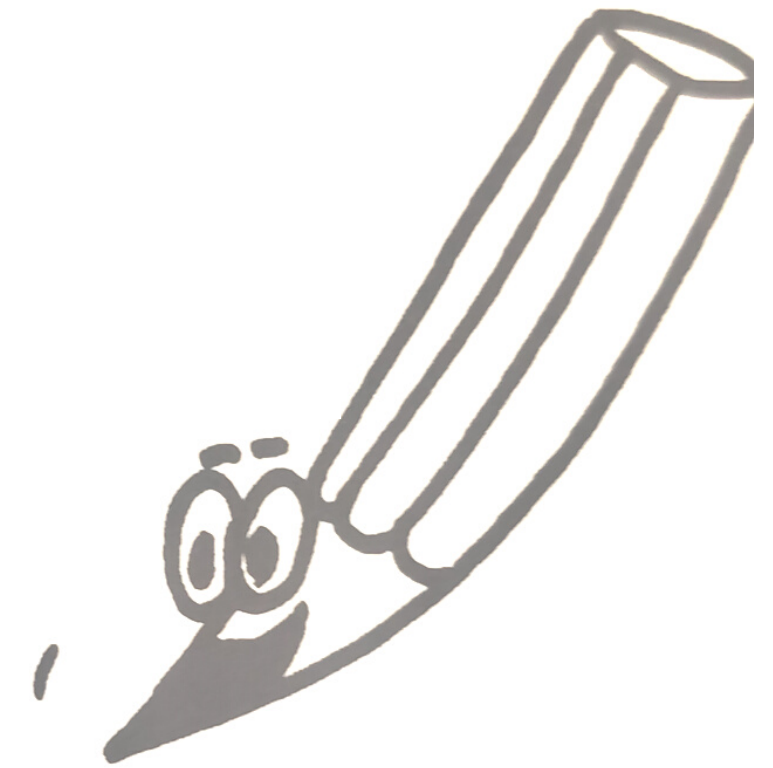
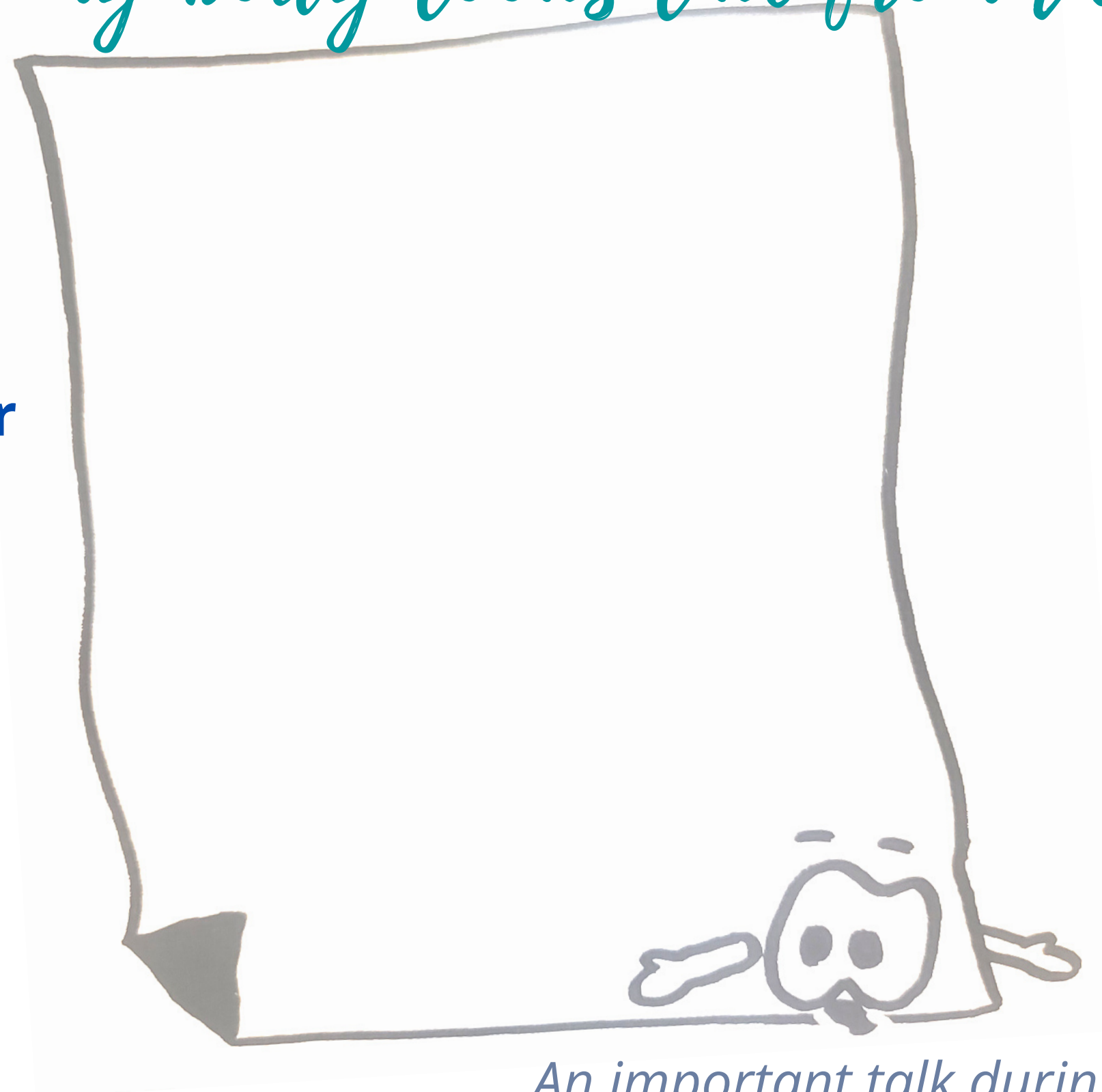
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*That's how my body looks like from the inside:*

**Ok!**

**So, let's get it started  
with another question:  
how do you picture your  
body from the inside?**

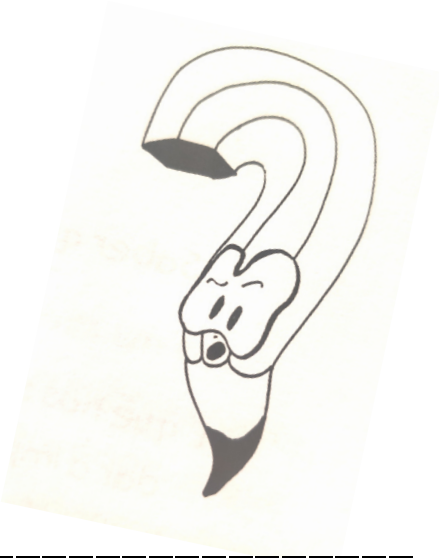
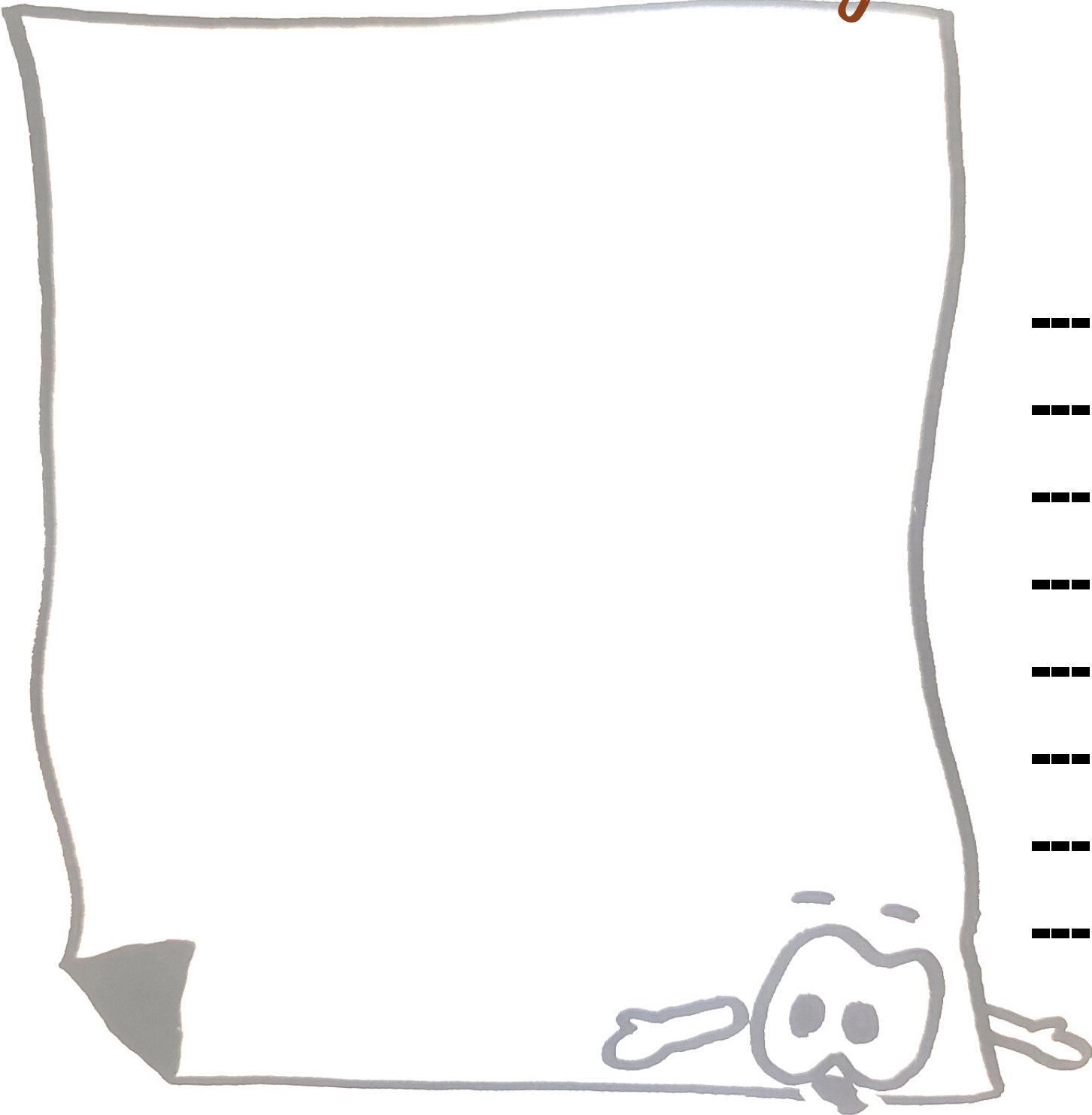
**Make a drawing to  
explain it:**



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*I take care of myself like that:*

**By taking care of our health we allow our body to function well. How do you take care of your health? Draw or describe it:**



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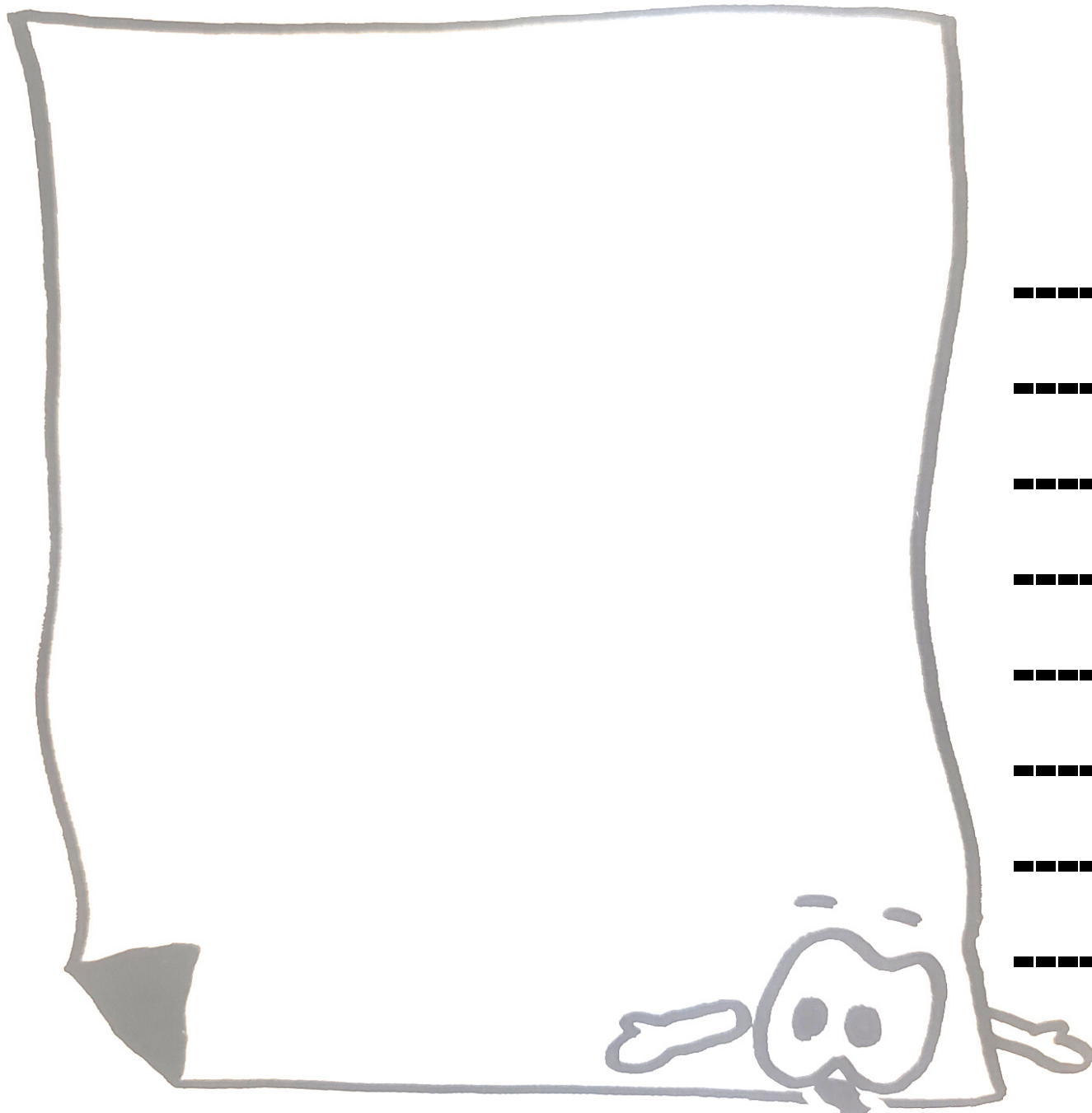
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*I love to do that:*

**If a person is alive,  
this person can:  
smell, hear, talk,  
play, and do so many  
things!**

**What are the things  
that you love to do  
the most? Draw or  
describe it:**

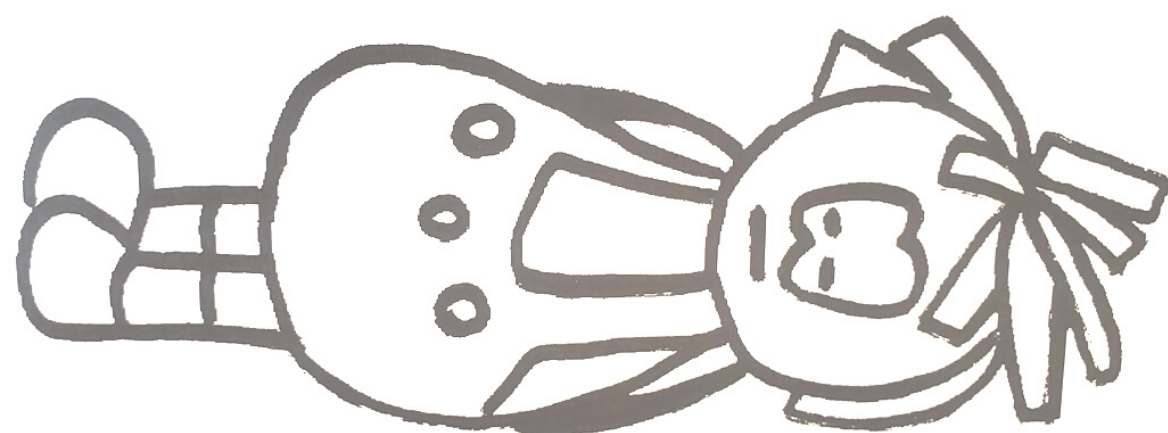


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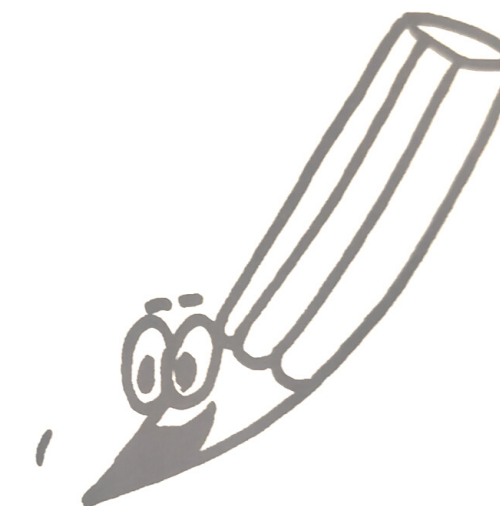
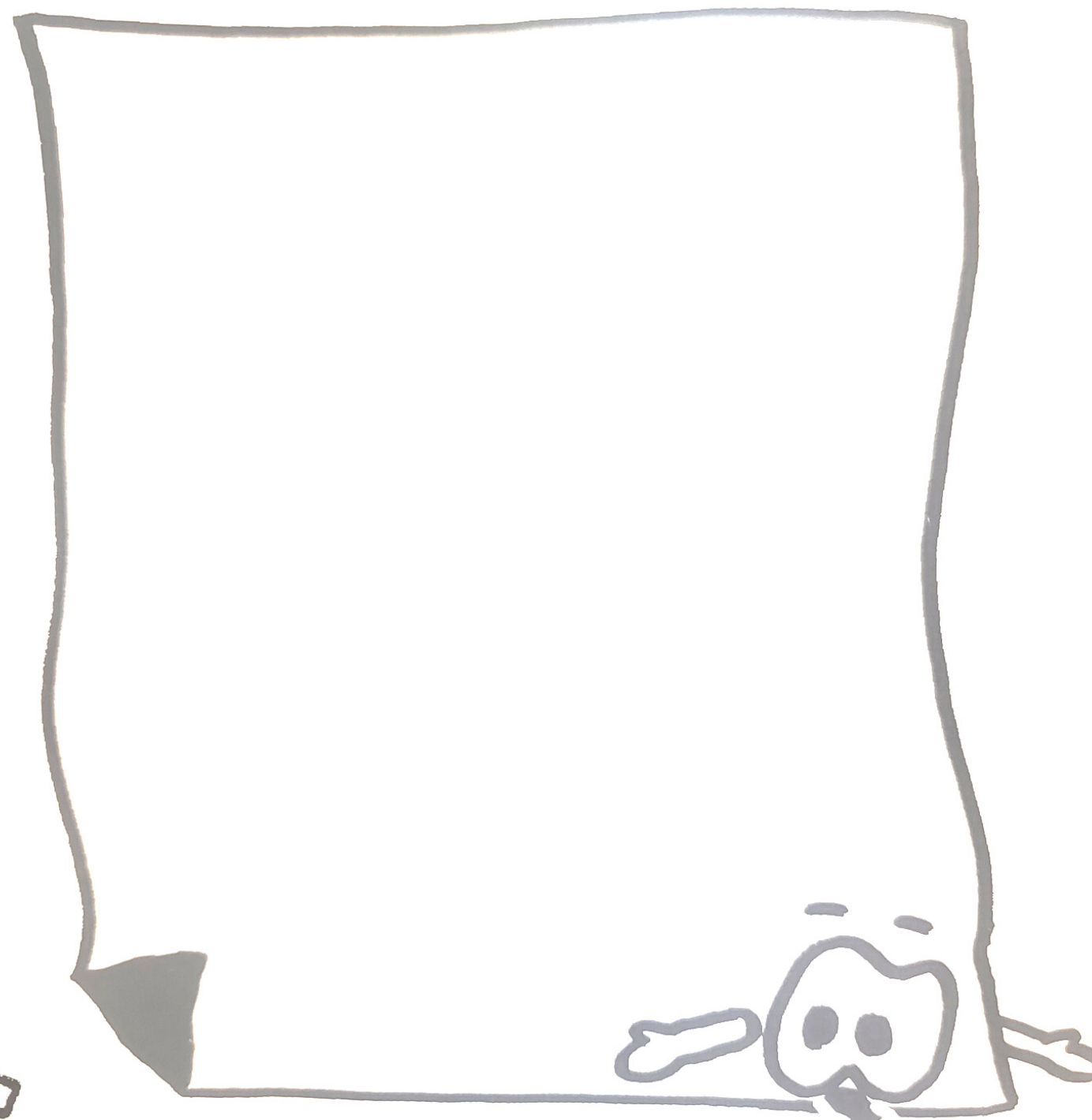
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When a person dies, the opposite happens. After death, the person can't feel anything. They can't smell anything or hear any sound.

That person can't feel any pain or see anything. Do you know someone who died? You can draw a picture of this person:



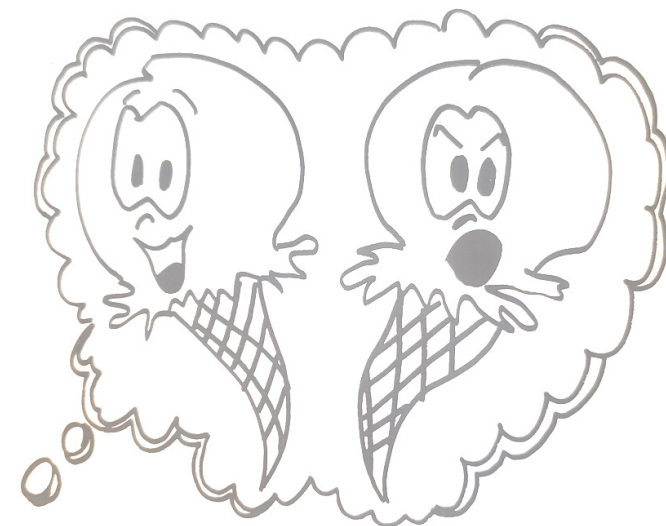
*I miss this person:*



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When someone dies, we can feel sadness and many other feelings too. Sometimes we may also feel very confused. We might miss that person a lot and feel we want to cry. Sometimes we might feel angry too.

Do you miss someone right now? Is there anything you would like to be doing with that person right now? You can draw a picture about that:



*I wish I could do  
this and that:*



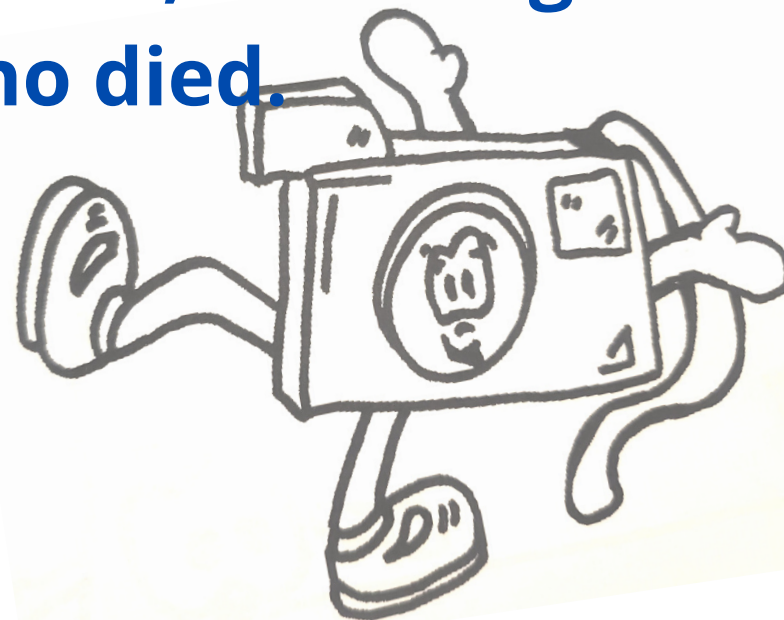
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## My memories:

Sometimes it is very frustrating not being able to do what we wish. It's sad not having that person that we always loved to be around. It is also sad to not have some people that we would love to be around us right now. But, we all have something very important that will help us out: our memory. Our memory is a part of our thoughts that helps us to remember many things that have already happened, including things about someone who died.

**You can draw or paste some things to keep your memories of someone who passed away:**



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We can also imagine and even dream about someone that passed away. Have you ever dreamt about someone who died? How was it? If you haven't, how do you think that dream would look like.

Have you ever dreamt of a person who had died? If so, how was your dream? If not, what would you like to dream about?

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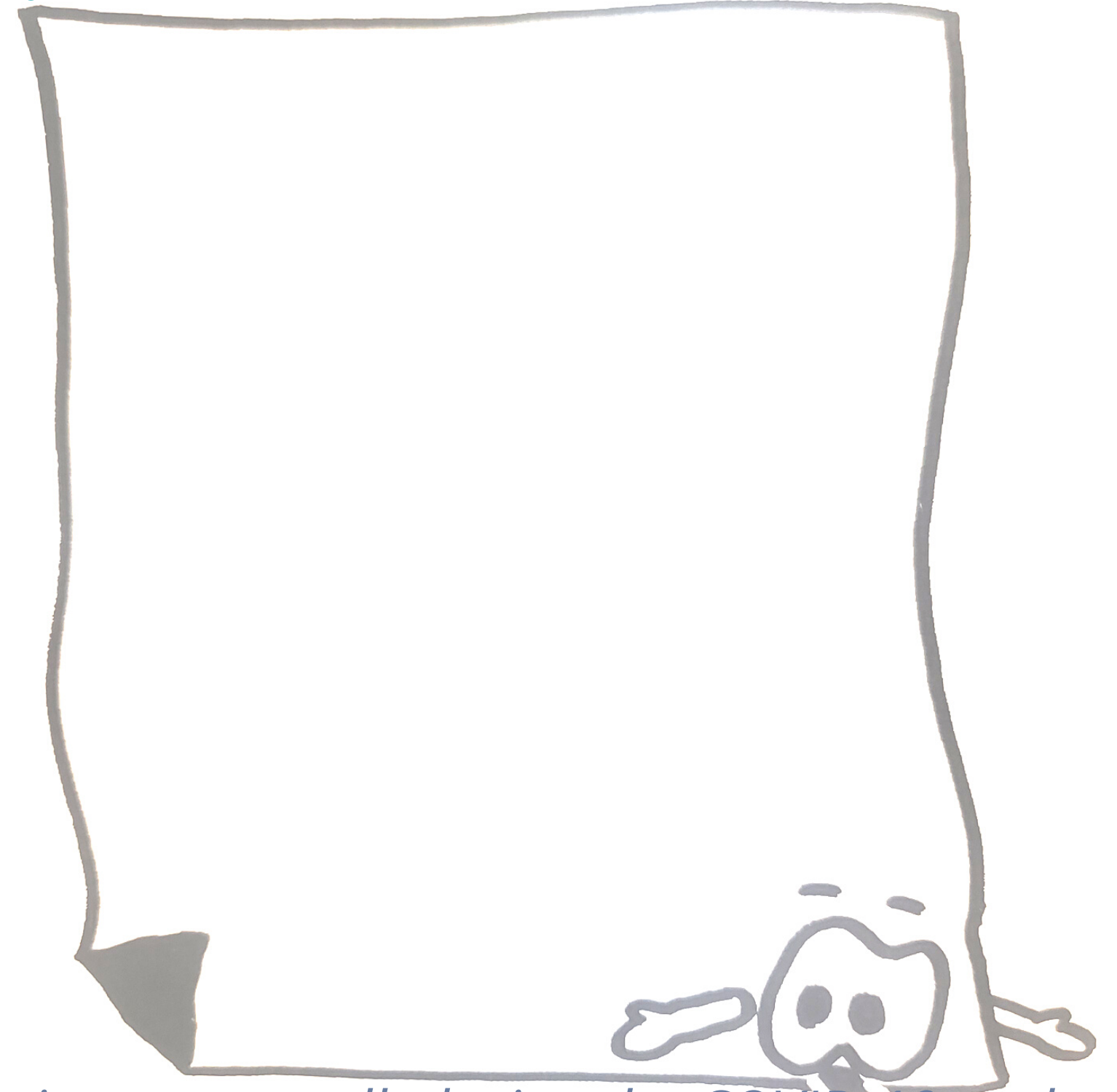
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*My dreams and imagination:*<sup>15</sup>



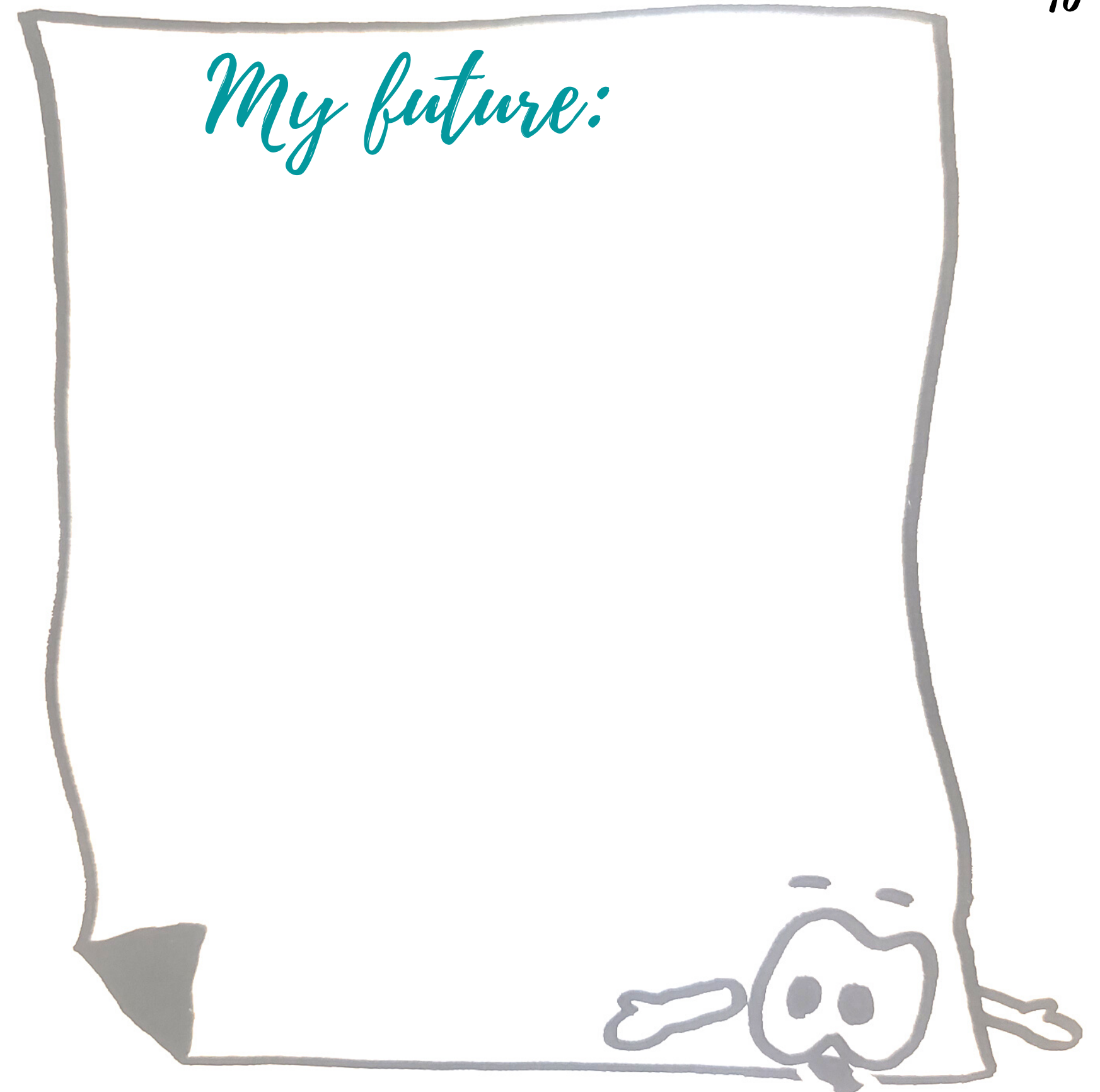
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When a beloved one dies, it might take a while for us to feel normal again. As time passes by, we will slowly learn how to adapt to this new situation - by using our memories, dreams and imagination.

By continuing to take care of ourselves, and caring for those who are still with us, we will be able to live our lives happily and appreciate the future in front of us.



*A fresh start.*  
~~The end.~~



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Carla Luciano Codani Hisatugo is from Brazil. She is a psychologist and an international researcher - with 20 years of practice. She holds a master's degree in Clinical Psychology and a Ph.D. in Medical Psychology. Her research and work embraces the fields of: Psychological Assessment, Mental Health and Personality, Child Development, and Children at Risk.

For more information about the COVID-19:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

